





**January 4, 2016**

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### **Spotlight on Success – The Southern Spread**

Brittany Freeman and Allison Jeffords are partner owners of The Southern Spread, a restaurant/catering service in Metropolis, Illinois. Ms. Jeffords has over 10 years of experience baking pies, cakes, wedding cakes, and bread. Daily specials feature Ms. Freeman's family recipes created by four generations of cooks. Her family encouraged her to get into the food business and she earned a Food Sanitation Certificate.

The Southern Spread originally began catering events for up to 30 people. The ladies have catered well over 50 events/parties since Thanksgiving. Their largest event was for 350 people and they have catered as far away as 200 miles. One customer has two events weekly on a regular basis and also orders many items between the events. A large portion of the restaurant business consists of carry-out orders in which complete meals or certain dishes are ordered and then picked up by customers.

Raspberry pork loin and smothered chicken are the top sellers. Tuesdays are "loaded spuds day" with a choice of butter, sour cream, cheese, chives, tomatoes, homemade salsa, bacon, and seasoned chicken.

The pair use local newspaper advertising, flyers, and social media but believe their best success is mostly fueled by word-of-mouth and repeat customers. They set reasonable prices but know that customers will spend a bit more to get quality food and excellent customer service.

**The Illinois Small Business Development Center at Shawnee Community College** assisted The Southern Spread with the start-up of the business and is continuing to provide assistance as the business makes plans to expand. Ms. Jeffords and Ms. Freeman said, "We appreciate the **SBDC** in helping us to enhance the way we operate the business. Also, they offer a number of classes that will assist and improve the way we do things". As a result of this business starting, 8 jobs have been created.

Learn more about The Southern Spread at: <https://www.facebook.com/BsScentThings/?fref=nf>

### **SBDC's In The News – The Chef and the Baker**

From the Mountain Tops to the East Bluff - The Chef and The Baker Impress - Climbing the mountains in Italy to cook meals for cross country skiers and climbing the ladder of Peoria area restaurants have been some of the successes of Ian and Karen Hocker. When they decided to start a business, this was another challenge they were ready to accept

Ian and Karen took slightly different paths to end up where they are today. Ian graduated from the Culinary Institute of America in the late '90s. Then he worked as a private chef in Italy, worked in the mountains of Italy serving food to cross country skiers, and worked for a Master Chef. He recently earned his Executive Chef Certification. Karen grew up helping in the kitchen. Even after college and working in another field, she felt more satisfaction in the kitchen. Because of this, she entered and completed the restaurant management and culinary arts program at Illinois Central College. Since then, she has worked in restaurants in Chicago and Peoria learning as much as she could.

After years of experience in restaurants, it was time for Ian and Karen to make the move to starting their own business. "We reached a skill level in our careers that to 'not' take a chance doing something on our own would stagnate our drive to pursue our dreams," said Ian. Karen says, "Although it is great to be my own boss, this was not my plan. I'm just supporting my husband.... I'm here to help it all come together." In May of 2014, the couple came to the Starting a Business in Illinois workshop at the Illinois Small Business Development Center. Ian states, "Ross Miller provides a class that nearly step by step walks you through starting your business. He provided us with all the necessary information, all we had to do was the leg work." After the workshop, there were other meetings to clarify specifics for the business. Then Ian and Karen got to work finding a location, which ended up being in their East Bluff neighborhood. Just a block from Glen Oak Park was a building that most recently was a barbeque restaurant. It was small and affordable enough for the Hocker's to start their business.

Since opening in the Summer of 2014, [The Chef and The Baker](#) have been involved in the community and received favorable press and reviews. They have over 2,100 "likes" on Facebook, a 5 star rating from 128 reviews and on Yelp they have a 4.5 star rating from 34 reviews. When it was time to hire their first employee, Karen came back to the center to understand the steps and requirements for hiring that first employee. "When we meet, Ross informs me of the next big step that I may need help with and to come in when that time comes, so he can help me through the next step," says Karen.

Ian and Karen plan to continue to grow the business. Ian says, "Our plan of the business is slow progressive growth, one that would provide us and the city of Peoria in a wealth of fresh flavors!" After tasting their food, many agree that The Chef and the Baker are a talented duo that will provide fresh flavors for years to come. Contact our center with questions about starting, managing, or growing a small business. We provide seminars and meet one-on-one with entrepreneurs. Contact us at (309) 677-2992 or [illinoissbdc@bradley.edu](mailto:illinoissbdc@bradley.edu). *By Ross Miller, Director, Illinois Small Business Development Center*

## **Maximizing Neoserra – Narratives**

Please remember to create **monthly** Narrative entries under the Activity Tab in Neoserra. Such entries may include work you do with local economic development agencies, resource development, advocacy and other topics. These Narratives are reported to SBA throughout the year and help explain in more detail the important work you do in your communities.

**The last day to enter information into Neoserra for December 2015 will be the close of business on January 15, 2016.**

## **Valued Resources – Tax Tips**

**For Small Businesses: IRS Raises Tangible Property Expensing Threshold to \$2,500; Simplifies Filing and Recordkeeping.** The IRS has simplified the paperwork and recordkeeping requirements for small businesses by raising from \$500 to \$2,500 the safe harbor threshold for deducting certain capital items. The change affects businesses that do not maintain an applicable financial statement (audited financial statement). It applies to amounts spent to acquire, produce or improve tangible property that would normally qualify as a capital item. The new \$2,500 threshold applies to any such item substantiated by an invoice. As a result, small businesses will be able to immediately deduct

many expenditures that would otherwise need to be spread over a period of years through annual depreciation deductions.

### **Small businesses should get their blank Wage and Tax Statements forms early**

Don't wait until the last minute to get blank Forms W-2, W-3 or 1099. The demand for paper tax products is declining because of an increase in e-filing and the availability of products online. Due to the decreased demand and printing and shipping costs, the IRS will no longer stock Forms W-2, W-3 and 1099 in Taxpayer Assistance Centers. The forms, which are used by small business owners, can be ordered online or by telephone and mailed directly to the taxpayer's home or business address.

To order online, go to the IRS' *Online Ordering for Information Returns and Employer Returns* website at: <https://www.irs.gov/Businesses/Online-Ordering-for-Information>Returns-and-Employer>Returns>

To order by phone, call the IRS at: 1-800-829-3676.

The Social Security Administration also offers an online option to create and file electronic Forms W-2. File Forms W-2/W-2c and W-3/W-3c electronically by visiting the Social Security Administration's *Employer Reporting Instructions and Information* website at: <https://www.socialsecurity.gov/employer/> to create and file electronic fill-in versions of Forms W-2 and W-3.

## **Network News and Moves – ACA Workshops**

The [U.S. Small Business Administration Illinois District Office](#) will deliver a series of Affordable Care Act (ACA) workshops with resource partners in the Chicagoland area. Health care remains a top concern for small business owners who may want to provide coverage but find it difficult to do so. These dialogues will educate small business owners about the ACA and how it affects them, providing them the information they need to take advantage of and comply with key provisions of the healthcare law.

The SBA will inform small business owners, including those who are self-employed, about ACA changes concerning health insurance coverage and provide information on how small business owners can leverage their buying power with other small businesses via the Small Business Health Options Program (SHOP) Marketplace. The SBA's free seminars will be open to business owners and local residents at the following locations. Advance registration is suggested, as seating is limited.

1/12/2016

Tuesday, 8:00 am to 10:00 am  
Chicago Area Gay & Lesbian Chamber of Commerce  
3179 North Clark Street, Chicago, IL  
Gerardo Rodriguez  
[glchamber@glchamber.org](mailto:glchamber@glchamber.org)  
773-303-0167

1/13/2016

Wednesday, 10:00 am to 12:00 pm  
Joseph Center SBDC  
7600 West Roosevelt Road, Forest Park, IL  
Melissa Brown  
[mbrown@livingwd.org](mailto:mbrown@livingwd.org)  
708-697-6234

1/14/2016

Thursday, 10:00 am to 12:00 pm  
Greater Englewood CDC  
815 West 63rd Street, Chicago, IL  
James Harbin  
[jharbin@greaterenglewoodcdc.org](mailto:jharbin@greaterenglewoodcdc.org)  
773-651-2400

If you have additional questions, please contact Mark Ferguson at 312-353-5430 or [mark.ferguson@sba.gov](mailto:mark.ferguson@sba.gov).



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The **WEEKLY CONNECTION** email is distributed by the Illinois SBDC and Illinois Department of Commerce Office of Entrepreneurship, Innovation and Technology each Monday to members of the Illinois SBDC Network to provide our service delivery partners with current updates on small business issues, opportunities and resources. Please send information to include to [Tom.Becker@illinois.gov](mailto:Tom.Becker@illinois.gov) and share this update with interested partners.

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